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Abstract

Summer camps have been conventionally associated with the positive development of individual character through the promotion of recreational 'fun.' However, popular narratives obscure more critical questions concerning the power-knowledge relations that have shaped the provision of summer camp fun as a significant site of child development in Canadian culture. In this article we examine how camp counsellors mobilise particular discourses about the benefits, or 'good', and 'fun' of camp to govern themselves and the campers that are in their care. We draw on Foucauldian notions of governmentality to problematise that which is often assumed as the 'truth' of camp experiences. We discuss how the 'good' of camp often draws on psy-discourses and those of entrepreneurial selves to improve or add value to campers' lives. Additionally, 'fun' discourses and practices can work to produce manageable and docile campers. We conclude the article by identifying the implications of the research for developing a critical approach to the management of young staff who work to provide a broad range of recreational experiences where benefits and fun are promised.

Introduction

Summer camps are a longstanding cultural institution in North America that conventionally have been associated with recreational fun that is a positive source of personal, physical and moral development for children and youth. Traditional residential camps, under the guidance and care of 16-25 year olds, offer a range of week to two month long recreational programs for children (5-15 years) during the summer school holidays. Within the academic literature on camp and outdoor recreation, there is an established body that identifies the individual benefits arising from camper experiences (Glover, Chapeskie, Mock, Mannel, & Feldberg, 2013; Henderson, Thurber, Schuler Whitaker, Bialeschki, & Scanlin, 2006). Similarly, social media, websites, marketing materials, and popular culture produce normalised expectations for camper experiences to be positive and life-changing. Consequently, the belief that “camps give kids a world of good” is broadly subscribed (Henderson, 1995, p.17). Yet it would be unrealistic to expect that camp experiences are always positive. A limited collection of academic studies about bullying (Carney & Nottis, 2008), homesickness (Thurber, Sigman, Weisz, & Schmidt, 1999) and injury (Barst, Bialeschki, & Comstock, 2008) suggest that not all moments of campers’ experiences are fun, happy or beneficial. Moreover, the literature is also limited in its exploration of the complexity and tensions associated with how campers negotiate the ‘good’ and ‘fun’ discourses that shape their experiences.

‘Good’ and ‘fun’ discourses not only shape camper experiences but also those of camp counsellors. It is the camp counsellors, as ‘front-line’ or ‘on-the-ground’ facilitators of camper experiences, who are responsibilised (Kelly, 2010) with the everyday development of campers’ moral character. Marketing materials suggest, for example, that “campers' self-confidence ...soars from the love and care” that camp counsellors provide (American

Camping Association, 2009). This may be an unrealistic promise. Adolescent staff are responsabilised to do this within a few weeks in a recreational setting. Such descriptions of camp experiences create idealistic, if not unrealistic, expectations for parent purchasers, child consumers, camp managers and camp counsellors. As the everyday authorities charged with managing campers conduct, camp counsellors are enmeshed in a complex web of power-knowledge relations (Foucault, 1980) and, as such, are required to negotiate discourses of ‘good’ and ‘fun’ camper experiences. A more critical understanding of how camp counsellors experience these discourses and power relations can offer insights for camp managers, camp organisation and, more broadly, child and youth recreational associations (i.e., sport, music, arts, dance, clubs) on how to support youthful leaders who are also responsabilised in the shaping of the conduct of their charges.

Using analytics of governmentality (Foucault, 1980), we undertake an analysis of how discourses of ‘good’ and ‘fun’ are taken up by camp counsellors to shape camper experiences. We include insights into the tensions and dilemmas that arise as camp counsellors negotiate relations of power as they attempt to mobilise techniques that will produce the ‘promised’ camper experiences. We wish to disrupt assumptions of ‘good’ and ‘fun’ that shape camper experiences and open up the possibility for understanding and acknowledging diverse camp counsellor experiences. Our contribution seeks to extend the empirical research on camp experiences through a discursive analysis of power-knowledge relations that come to *govern* camper and camp counsellor experiences as well as their subjectivities.

Considering camp experiences through governmentality

To explore the ‘good’ and ‘fun’ discourses of camper experiences, we approach camper experiences as shaped through discourses of camp government. Governmentality is concerned with the mentalities, rationalities and techniques through which subjects are governed or the “conduct of conduct” (Foucault, 1982a, pp. 220-221). Different modes of governmentality influence individuals’ “abilities and resources, relationships of communication, and power relationships” within a regulated system (Marshall, 1997, p. 37). One mode of governmentality, that is explored here, is how discourses work, as technologies of power, to produce “a field of possible knowledge” (Rouse, 1994, p. 98) for ‘normal’ camper experiences. By establishing what is ‘normal’ or expected from individuals, such as campers, it is possible to “measure gaps” and highlight discrepancies (Foucault, 1977). Consequently, authorities (such as camp counsellors) can persuade, discipline and produce docile, compliant and manageable bodies (Foucault, 1982b). Since power relations are “distributed throughout complex social networks” (Rouse, 1994, p. 106) and are always present, camp discourses can gain the status and currency of ‘truth’ and dominate how camper experiences are articulated and organised.

Camp discourses and practices not only shape campers’ experiences but also shape how campers and camp counsellors come to see and govern themselves. This kind of monitoring of one’s own behaviours, and the formation of the subject within power relations, is the process that Foucault (1986) names subjectification. Foucault argues that subjectification occurs through technologies of self through which individuals, with or without the help of others, affect a “certain number of operations on their own bodies and souls, thoughts, conduct, and way of being, to transform themselves in order to attain a certain state” (Foucault, 1986, p. 2). This form of power works in the ways that campers and camp counsellors take-up and mobilise discourses that are seen as ‘truth’ for camper

experiences. By mobilising ‘good’ and ‘fun’ discourses established for camper experiences, campers and camp counsellors also reinforce the ‘truths’ created by the camp industry. Alternative discourses are marginalised and subjugated, yet potentially offer sites where hegemonic practices can be contested, challenged and resisted.

Campers and camp counsellors are not necessarily bound to the roles or identities prescribed to them within camp practices and discourses. Both can identify “modalities of power that constrain, limit or repress forms of self-expression” and thus employ multiple identities to creatively negotiate power relations (Elliott, 2001, p. 101). Campers, for example, are not passive to control; they are creative agents in resisting or accepting camp discourses and practices. Allen (2004) and Elliott (2001) argue that people creatively engage power relations to produce selves through the acceptance of, or resistance to, discourses and practices. Therefore, camp discourses, as “ways of constituting knowledge” (Weedon, 1987, p.108), “can attach to strategies of domination as well as those of resistance” (Diamond and Quinby, 1988, p.185). Foucault (1979, p. 96) suggests that the “mobile and transitory” nature of power relations produces “cleavages” in experience that furrow “across individuals themselves.” These cleavages in, or moments of resistance to, camp norms highlight the complex workings of power relations. By drawing on governmentality, we explore how ‘good’ and ‘fun’ discourses are articulated, taken-up, and resisted by camp counsellors as well as work to govern themselves and campers in their care.

Camp genealogy: Traditional contexts of summer camps

This section serves as a brief genealogy, rather than a history, of North American summer camp through considering how historical developments and discursive productions of camp have contributed to the possibilities of camper experiences. A genealogy destabilises

assumptions of “theoretical, unitary, formal and scientific discourse” to consider how a subject is subjected (Foucault, 1980, p.85). A genealogy helps to explore and contextualise discourses that have shaped summer camp experiences over the past 150 years in North America. For example, Paris’s (2008) historical account of North American camps suggests that camp experiences were designed to socialise children in particular ways such as in ideals of class, Christianity and American values. While camps have evolved in many ways (purposes, populations and contexts) since their establishment, many of the same discourses continue to shape how camps are organised, articulated and delivered.

At the end of the nineteenth century in North America, because of industrialisation, it was felt that young people had lost the benefits deeply accorded to the outdoors (Meier & Mitchell, 1993, p. 18). Paris (2008, p. 7) writes that a “widely disparate group of adults” decided that rural spaces might again become the avenue through which to teach children “social acculturation and good citizenship.” Morality could be regained through physical activities, personal fitness and outdoor activities. These beliefs were central to movements of Muscular Christianity, such as YMCAs, which purported a bettering of the self and the achievement of moral high ground through physical and spiritual practices (Kidd, 2006).

The late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries saw a rising interest and visible distinction of childhood as a separate time from adult life (Prout & James, 2015). It was argued that innocence, play, education and a lack of work should be the right of childhood (Prout & James, 2015). The special interest in the unique stage of childhood brought with it a host of expertise about what was appropriate for the development of children and youth. Educators, doctors and psychologists, suggested that children and youth required pastoral care to help them develop morally. While pastoral care was once concerned with the

Christian notion of salvation from a pastor, within the rationalities of neo-liberalism it is concerned the creation of “individuals who will take responsibility for their own fates through the exercise of choice, and the organisation of socio-political concerns around the management and minimisation of risks” (Rose, 2000, p. 337). Consequently, neo-liberal practices of pastoral care often take the language of psy-discourses (language of psychology, psychiatry and other psy-disciplines) to position children and youth in need of improvement (Rose, 1998). Rose (1990) argues that parents are urged to ensure that their children engage in activities that will benefit their child’s long-term success by becoming an enterprising citizen. Through the cultivation of techniques of self-reliance, aided by “experts of subjectivity,” the active, autonomous, responsible entrepreneurial self is constituted (Rose, 1998, p. 151-152). When applied to camper experiences, the assumption is that by developing multiple talents and capabilities, campers will be able to forestall risk and maximise opportunity. With promises of moral character development, pastoral care was, and still is, at the very heart of the establishment of summer camps. Consequently, discourses about the benefits, or ‘good,’ of camper experiences are complex since they have been shaped by the hopes and fears of adults (experts and parents) of the last 150 years of child development.

Problematising Summer Camp Research

Research on summer camps have largely continued the traditions of early summer camps with a focus on the effects of camp on moral development. Summer camp research has a strong and established tradition of measuring ‘character development’ through camper experiences (Ewert, 1987). For example, Henderson et al.’s (2006) study, like many others (Hattie, Marsh, Neill, & Richards, 1997; Henderson, 2003; Henderson, Bialeschki, Scanlin, Thurber, Whitaker, & Marsh, 2006-2007; Henderson, Scanlin, Whitaker, Thurber, Marsh, Burkhardt, & Bialeschki, 2005; Holman & McAvoy, 2003; Sibthorp & Arthur-Banning,

2004), foregrounds the positive camp experiences that adds value to a child's life. The insights gained from these studies have contributed significantly to understanding the value of outdoor experiences, however they rely primarily on positivist assumptions and ways of measuring camp experiences as 'beneficial.' Hence, understanding the complex range of experiences is limited and the embodied and discursive dimensions of experience remain largely invisible (Allison & Pomeroy, 2000).

Scholars such as Barrett (2005), Brookes (2003; 2004), Humberstone (2000), Humberstone & Stan (2012), Leather (2013), Lynch and Moore (2004), and Zink and Burrows (2006), extend the knowledge of outdoor experiences by drawing on post-modern approaches that also seek to problematize. For example, Barrett (2005) considers what feminist poststructuralism can offer understandings of environmental research and practice. Brookes (2003; 2004) challenges the assumptions that dominate outdoor education theory and curriculum in Australia. These scholars inform the research offered here, however their work in outdoor experiences differs from the unique context of summer camps and, as yet, few studies consider this through critical or post-modern approaches. This article responds to Allison & Pomeroy's (2000) call for scholarship that considers outdoor experiences in alternative and new ways to the "outcome-focused, objectivist epistemology" that has previously been employed. By drawing on analytics of governmentality, this article offers a way of problematizing, questioning common 'truths' (Foucault 1989), through rethinking and acknowledging the power relations and rationalities that shape camper and camp counsellor experiences.

Research Methods

We have conducted a Foucauldian-inspired discourse analysis of 38 in-depth interviews and 51 web-published purpose (vision, mission and/or value) statements to explore how ‘fun’ and ‘good’ discourses were mobilised by camp counsellors.

Research Design

A pool of potential interview participants (individuals who have worked as camp counsellors) was generated through a variety of familiar and novel contacts. Camp counsellors are usually high school or university/college students that work at camp as a ‘summer job’ and, often, because they enjoyed being a camper. Purposive sampling was employed to choose participants that represented diversity in demographic characteristics such as gender, age (17 -55 years), and level of education (high school to graduate degrees). Dimensional sampling was also used to choose a variety of research participants on two dimensions; the amount of time a participant had spent at camp (0-10+ summers as a camper and 1-10+ summers/years as a staff) and how proximal participants were in time to their last camp employment experiences (current to 10+ years since involvement). The first author conducted thirty-eight in-depth interviews, using a semi-structured interview guide, with people from Ontario, Canada. Interviews were conducted and recorded during a one month period in 2009. Participants in this study usually spoke from a camp counsellor or a camp director perspective. Given the focus of this article on the ways which camp counsellors mobilise discourses, we have largely chosen accounts that depict this perspective. Where an interview participant speaks from a different perspective we identify this after their pseudonym.

The interview participants were aged between 17 to 59 years with the highest number coming from the 25 to 29 year bracket (40%). Interview participants were female 63% and

37% male. Interview participants varied in the number of summers they attended camps as campers and/or were employed by a camp. A 'summer' as a camp employee, for the most part, is considered a two month contract whereas a 'summer' as a camper is usually a week to month long program in July and August. It should be noted that the term 'summer' is used loosely and is a crude measurement. The largest number of participants attended five summers as a camper with majority of the sample attending four, eleven and no summers as a camper respectively. Camp counsellor employment experiences ranged from one to over twelve summer/years of experience. Most interview participants worked one, three, or four summers. The roles that interview participants were last employed was evenly distributed across three different capacities within camps; as camp counsellors, middle management / program staff or as managers / directors. The majority of interview participants had either just completed a summer season or were currently employed in full-time (year round) camp roles at the time of the interviews.

To better understand how camp experiences were shaped, we collected and analysed 51 web-published purpose statements (mission, vision or value statements) from camps that interview participants attended as campers or where they had been employed. These were collected in 2012 and have been given pseudonyms when individual statements are quoted. The excerpts included from these were chosen because they aligned with dominant discourses observed in genealogical and research texts as well as offering well stated examples of 'good' and 'fun' discourses. These purpose statements, which often serve as promotional material as well as value statements, demonstrate the social and institutional discourses of camps studied here. By understanding the idealised expectations and assumptions for camper experiences, we can then explore how interview participants, as camp counsellors, responded to relations of power.

Discourse Analysis

This study draws on discourse analysis to consider how meanings were produced and prioritized within a particular context (Iedema & Wodak, 1999). We have drawn on a Foucauldian-inspired analysis to explore “how discursive practices constitute both objectivities (social institutions, knowledge) and subjectivities (identities and actions)” (Cunliffe, 2008, p.81). Our approach reflects a concern with “the way in which texts themselves have been constructed” and situated (Cheek, 2004, p. 1144). We conducted this discourse analysis by, namely, identifying social and institutional discourses through historical texts, previous research, marketing materials and organisational publications and then looking at how interview participants spoke about and responded to these within relations of power. We organised our analysis of ‘good’ and ‘fun’ discourses by offering two possible interpretations of each in order to represent the multiplicity of meaning making from the same or similar language and texts. While there are many more meanings possible for the experiences of and discourses about camp, we focussed on these groupings in order to demonstrate the web or weaving of texts while maintaining clarity within the limitations of this article. In so doing, our discourse analysis works to problematize the discourses that place limitations on camper and camp counsellor experiences.

Post-structuralism, in which Foucauldian approaches are situated, assumes that there is no “privileged form of authoritative knowledge” (Richardson, 2000, p.8). Our research, therefore, does not claim to reveal the ‘truth’ about camp counsellor employment experiences but rather an interpretation of interview participants’ derived meanings. Richardson suggests that language “produces meaning and creates social reality” which cannot be universalised (Richardson, 2000, p.8). In addition, the stories participants tell about their camp employment

experiences will be different depending on the discourses available to them (Richardson, 2000). Consequently, concepts of reliability and validity are problematic (Richardson, 2000). Cheek (2004) argues that the application of traditional discourse analysis validity criteria to critical and Foucauldian discourse analysis contradicts the partiality of knowing and representing research. Crystallisation “deconstructs the traditional idea of validity” because crystals offer “an infinite variety of shapes, substances, transmutations, multidimensionalities, and angles of approach” without becoming “amorphous” (Richardson, 2000, p.13). That is, in this study, ‘good’ and ‘fun’ discourses can be observed in historical, research, marketing and interview participant texts in a variety of ways. Even within these texts, like crystals, meanings “reflect externalities and refract within themselves” (Richardson, 2000, p.13). We have drawn on multiple sources of information to see “how texts validate themselves” without assuming or seeking to construct a singular truth. Additionally, “what we see depends upon our angle of repose” (Richardson, 2000) and we acknowledge that our Foucauldian approach has influenced our interest in exploring how camp counsellors negotiate the intersection of being subject to and subjecting others to camp discourses in varying ways. By taking a Foucauldian inspired approach to discourse analysis, the value of this study is in the illustration of how multiple sources of text reinforce, and challenge, dominant discourses of the ‘good’ and ‘fun’ of camp.

Governing ‘good’ and ‘fun’ camper experiences

Discourses of morality about the ‘good’ gained and ‘fun’ experienced through camp are prolific in camp marketing materials and they work to shape the kinds of camper experiences possible. For example, one camp website stated that they encouraged “young lives to grow spiritually, mentally, socially, and physically in an exciting, fun-filled and safe

‘adventure experience’” (Camp North Woods, purpose statement, 2012). These statements assumed that character growth is always positive, beneficial and/or desired by the camper and their parents. Additionally, camp statements also promised that campers will experience “success” (Otto Camp, Camp Cedarhurst and Camp Bluejay, purpose statements, 2012), or be a “winner” (Dr. Thompson Camp, purpose statement, 2012) or a “star” (Camp McKenzie, purpose statement, 2012). In addition, “fun” was found as frequently in the purpose statements of camps as language that referred to personal growth (multiple purpose statements, 2012). Fun is mobilised as a strategy through which to attract youthful participants. Statements such as “**FUN IS OUR TRADEMARK!**” appear to be clearly shouting out to youthful consumers (Wilderness Resort, purpose statement, 2012, emphasis in the original). Hence there are tensions between expectations of childhood enjoyment and expected productive outcomes of summer camp experiences. The everyday discourses that articulate the moral ‘good’ that one acquires through the ‘fun’ experienced at summer camp, are largely assumed to be natural or normal. Yet they are strategies directed at producing not only compliant camp citizens, but also ‘good’ self-managing citizens more broadly.

Camp counsellors must navigate complex discourses of camper development, enjoyment, and care. As such they govern themselves in accordance with camp norms; promoting positive stories and silencing others. The following sections explore the ‘good’ expected for camper experiences through the mobilisation of therapeutic and entrepreneurial skill discourses. This is followed by examining the discourses of the ‘fun’ of camper experiences through enjoyment and discipline. This study offers a critical examination of how camp counsellors take-up, mobilise and resist ‘good’ and ‘fun’ discourses in order to open up possibilities for and understanding of camper and camp counsellor experiences.

Good for campers: Mobilising discourses of therapeutics

Within the text of seven different purpose statements the language of personal improvement described the ‘promises’ of camper development; “self-esteem,” “confidence,” and personal “values.” One stated that, “self-confidence that lasts a lifetime” was at “the heart” of their camp experiences (Camp Waw-waw, purpose statement, 2012). The popularization and growing influence of psy-disciplines has made the use of psychological terms and concepts widely accessible. Rose (1990, p. 131) states that “psychology has played a key role in ... providing vocabularies for speaking about childhood subjectivity and its problems, and in inventing technologies for cure and normalisation.” Through the mobilisation of therapeutic language, camp managers and organisations position themselves as experts on the conditions of the psyche. For example, when the American Camping Association (ACA) states that they wish to be “a leading authority in child development” (ACA, 2008), they hope to legitimise their expertise in achieving good and moral citizenship. The prevalence of psy-discourses indicates the adoption of a therapeutic model of self (Rose, 1990) which frames the camper as deficient and in need of improvement, even treatment. Consequently, camp managers and camp counsellors are positioned, and position themselves, as the experts who act to improve campers’ inner selves. The mobilisation of expertise can produce “new relationship between knowledge and government...and in the technologies that seek to give them effect” (Rose, 1996, p.156). Rather than a purely recreational enterprise, camps and their governing bodies position themselves, and camp counsellors by extension, as experts of a form of normalised therapeutic intervention program for children and youth.

Many interview participants agreed that camp provides positive, if not life-changing, experiences for those who attend. Of all the interviews, April’s account most typified the genre of narratives of ‘good’ told about summer camp experiences:

This is a wonderful story. I'm not going to do it justice. You would have to see the transformation yourself. We had a boy that came and this was his fourth summer at camp ... He had a whole range of learning disabilities, slight autism, Asperger's –that sort of thing. And he came as the most unstable –he was a mess. He was really a mess. And then we worked hard with him for a month ... and this summer, he just completely transformed into the most popular boy at camp ... it was a complete transformation. It's like it [camp] had gotten rid of his problems almost ... I think camp saved him ...

April draws on psy-discourses to suggest that the camp staff knew what was best for this camper and went about addressing his deficiencies until he was both “transformed” and “saved.” While April's story suggests that various technologies had worked to help the camper master and produce a normalised self, the account illustrates the assumptions that positive changes resulted directly from camp experiences. Other processes of maturation that may have occurred during the other 11 months of the year, escaped attention. The source of the positive change described is attributed to “we,” the camp staff, as authorities on appropriate child development. These discourses position camp experiences at the centre of personal development in totalizing ways. Consequently, camp counsellors are positioned as both eager, and reluctant, experts of child psychology who are expected to positively transform campers. Even the term camp *counsellor* reinforces the view that campers need guidance, and/or psychological help or improvement which can be delivered by youthful staff. It is through this individualizing knowledge and assessment of a person's life, or what Foucault refers to as “pastoral power” (1982a, p.783), that government can be conducted in a more pervasive and permeant ways. Stories and experiences that diverge from normalised discourses of transformation can be silenced; a child could be made to feel incompetent, incapable and unworthy, and have no way to articulate or be heard.

The desire to deliver the promises of positive effects often overrode the realities of insufficient experience, resources or expertise in interview participants' accounts. Many described scenarios where the special needs, conditions and diagnoses of campers overwhelmed their capacities such as haemophilia (Grant), sickle cell (Richard), Prader-Willi Syndrome (Grant), Down Syndrome (Amie, Elissa, Grant, James, Lisa and Rachel), ADD and ADHD and Ritalin holidays (Elissa), and Anxiety disorders (Elissa). Vicky described the attendance of

...a girl that every time you would let go of her hand she would scream because she would need two people holding her hands at all times 'cause she couldn't handle being at camp. It was way too much for her.

Normalised discourses of camp's therapeutic value and assumptions that camp benefits all participants, often created situations and dilemmas that camp counsellors had little power to influence. The pressures created by 'good' discourses can blind managers' critical engagement with how counsellors are responsabilised to deliver individually beneficial experiences and the techniques of power that are often exercised to produce 'normalised' children.

While interview participants experienced pressures to 'normalise' the children in their care, their interviews suggested they viewed and governed themselves as the authorities who knew what was best for *their* camper. Interview participants mobilised 'good' discourses to position themselves as authorities who were able to govern those within their care to produce improved campers. Troy suggested that counsellors wanted to feel, "as though you are doing something that benefits not only yourself but them [campers] as well, foremost them." Camp counsellors take up the language of camper improvement and inscribe this in their everyday

subjectivities. In this way, language works as a technology of self (Foucault, 1988) in constituting camp counsellors' subjectivities. Eric demonstrates how camper self-improvement reinforced his authority as a camp counsellor:

...some of my favourite moments are the growth that you see in a lot of the kids. A lot of times they have very closed perspective on their abilities and it's important that they have a five-step program, or five qualities that they try to improve, and those are team work, goal setting, environmental knowledge and awareness, adventure skills, and, responsible leadership ...Seeing a real positive change in all of these characteristics... it just makes you feel that much better about helping these kids because your still a positive value to them. And I really felt that was the biggest highlight was just helping these kids realize they can do so much in the world.

Eric describes how he sees his own value, as a camp counsellor, through the value that he, *personally*, added to campers' lives. Eric articulated his contribution, in this comment, by the recognition by his campers that they could "do so much in the world." The five qualities, are powerful technologies of self-mastery (Foucault, 1986) that work to produce campers as entrepreneurial subjects. Yet questioning the positioning of young people, who themselves are barely beyond childhood, as authorities to produce 'normalised' children are quashed through the attribution of value and 'good.'

Good for parents: Mobilising discourses of entrepreneurial selves

The discourses of camp as being beneficial and offering value-adding experiences are multifaceted and align with the production of neo-liberal enterprising selves. Under the rationalities of neo-liberal rule, Rose (1990, p. 121) argues that parents are urged to ensure

their children's "'normal' development," specifically "to actively promote ... intelligence, educability, and emotional stability." Camps echo this with promises of children's growth in education, emotional skills and social citizenship (ACA, 2008). Henry gives an example of the expectations of parents for their child's skill development at camp:

"We had a parent that called up and said you know she had a great time at camp and she made lots of friends and everything was fine at camp, but she didn't jump a fence. She didn't jump 3.6 or something. And then we'll say, "your riding staff must have felt that she wasn't ready for that."

"Well she is ready for that. And we went to camp specifically so she would jump this fence, and she didn't jump this fence."

Henry's example illustrates how parents invest significant value in the learning of certain skills and expected outcomes. When parents purchase camp experiences for their children they are attempting to govern the family through neo-liberal rationalities to produce, as Foucault (1991) argues, autonomous, self-regulating individuals. Sending a child to camp means, with the assurance from the ACA, that parents are doing the right thing in addressing the 'normal' and healthy developmental needs of their children. The relationship, therefore, between parent consumers and camp promoters is mutually reinforcing. Parents want to purchase moral character for their children to fulfil their duties as caring parents and camps want to sell their product.

Camp counsellors appeared to take up the discourses of producing entrepreneurial individuals and frequently articulated this through campers' attainment of skills. For example, Lisa illustrates improving the swimming abilities of campers as a "benefit":

...we always did at the beginning of the week a swim test, and they would get Red, Yellow or Green. If you were Red, you had to stay in the shallow end, Yellow in the

deep end with a lifejacket and Green could go anywhere in the pool. Kids coming back for several weeks during the summer, you could see their progress and they might move up a colour. Even though we weren't teaching formal lessons, it was just that practice of being in the pool; you could see them benefit from that (Lisa).

The attainment and development of skills is produced through normalising judgement that acts as a measure of the entrepreneurial success of the camper and of the camp counsellor who guided or coached them in this achievement. Normative discourses about the contribution of camper experiences to the future success of children is iterated by multiple stakeholders such as organising bodies like the ACA (2008) who state that camps are “enriching lives, building tomorrows,” and camp industry leaders like ACA's 1998-2014 Executive Director, Peg Smith, who said that “it's not about camp but about making people better” (Rasenberger, 2008, p. 24). It no surprise, therefore, that camp counsellors governed camper experiences and themselves in ways that insures campers' future through the development of entrepreneurial skills. Discourses of entrepreneurial selves work to produce the ‘benefits’ of camp as a regime of truth, that does not allow for failure. Ironically, ‘good’ discourses exclude and make recreational discourses, doing something fun or enjoyable for its own sake, an impossible or unrealistic possibility within camps.

“Make sure you have fun” (Trudy): discursive tensions of enjoyment and obligation

There are tensions within the kinds of serious or obligated fun that is expected for campers and camp counsellors. Experiences of fun were described as self-evident and dominated the landscapes of subjectivity in summer camps. For example, thirty interview participants mentioned “fun” 240 times. Rachel talked about camper experiences as “they're there for a week. That's their week of fun” and Trudy insisted that counsellors should also

have fun by advising, “make sure you have fun.” In fact, having fun was expected and normalised to the degree that ‘fun’ was regarded as an incontestable camp ‘truth’ and a strategy through which camp objectives were achieved. Interview participants also regulated their conduct to produce a sense of fun: “you work a lot but it’s fun” (Grant). Lucy, in contrast, said “know that it’s not all fun and games” (Lucy). Lucy’s comment was intended as a warning to other camp counsellors of the dilemma created by the promise of camp fun and the work of delivering this to campers. The obligated nature of fun within camp contexts is implied but not always explicit.

Leisure experiences, like camps, are perceived as being invariably more ‘free’ than normal or ‘real’ life, with play and recreation privileged as contemporary spaces of individual freedom (Rojek, 1995). Yet in a context like camp there are varying degrees of freedom (Rojek, 1995). Campers, for example, are expected (and told) to have fun through participation and cannot choose to ‘sit out’ or not participate. Sara, Eric, Rebecca and Steph talked disparagingly about times when campers or experiences did not conform to discourses of pleasure and fun. In fact, when a camper did not embrace the ‘outdoorsy’ aspects of camp, Andy said, “I don’t think you should come back next year because there are people that would like this spot more than you.” With this kind of pressure to enjoy camp experience, it is little wonder that most campers, or at least the ones that return year after year, become enthusiasts even if they don’t start out that way. Andy’s story provides a keen example of how summer camp practices play out in rule bound contexts where freedom is produced in particular ways through play and work as well as post-modern notions of moral development (Rose, 1990).

Discourses of fun and enjoyment were reinforced so pervasively through interviews that no matter how challenging, benign, or uncomfortable, camp experiences were narrated with an attitude of positivity. As Rachel recounted:

...we're stuck in between these two pieces of floating land mass and we had to send these 2 kids up to the office because we're stuck. We couldn't go anywhere. You can't walk on it. It's awful, but it's so much fun. I mean, I know people on staff who couldn't handle it. They'd get freaked out, but I loved it. ... Like we couldn't do anything, so I spent an hour treading water in the lake, waiting for people to come down and get these canoes, but it's fun.

Rachel's example illustrates how powerful discourse of fun work to silence stories of discomfort and unpleasantness. She appears to have governed her feelings and re-framed fear and risk as "fun." How Rachel subjugated herself illustrates the tensions created by assuming that camp is fun for everyone and at all times. When camp 'fun' is assumed as 'truth' then stories that diverge may be ignored or silenced. Rachel's story also points to the expectation that camp counsellors enact 'fun' in order to ensure that campers experience 'fun' even when both are unwilling, exhausted or not up to the task. In this way, camps are a unique site of subjectification through which pleasure and enjoyment, discipline and regulation are exercised through notions of fun.

Extreme walking and marshmallows: Employing practices of fun for discipline

Camp counsellors often utilise the enjoyment of an activity to discipline campers. For example, when 'fun' is not obvious to campers, such as during cabin clean-up, staff may infuse fun by awarding a clean cabin trophy. The first author knew a counsellor who used "extreme walking," where campers could not step on the ground, as a way of turning the

commute from cabin to dining hall into a game. While the campers found this to be a fun exercise, the counsellor was motivated to occupy “his boys” from ripping up plants, breaking branches and hitting trees on the way. Tom suggested that the most enjoyable aspect of being a camp counsellor is when campers join into the “fun” being “facilitated” and, consequently, troublesome behaviours are abandoned for a time,

And that’s when it becomes the most fun; when you and your kids have that respect and that understanding and you’re out there to have fun too and they’re out there to have fun and you’re just facilitating it for them. That’s the most fun when you’re not worrying about whose acting out and whose picking on the other kid and whose talking back.

Tom’s example illustrates how ‘fun’ can be used to engage campers in appropriate behaviours and avoid those that are hard to manage. McCuaig (2012) argues that it is through fun that children learn the skills expected, such as not picking on other kids or not destroying nature out of boredom, and through this their characters becomes morally improved.

Disciplinary power is exercised when individuals are observed, subjected to normalizing judgement, and their behaviours are reformed (Foucault, 1977). The creation of docile bodies (Foucault, 1977) through ‘fun’ allows camp counsellors to deliver expected camper benefits through the achievement of normative camper selves.

Not all attempts at ‘fun’ behaviour management reflects the intention to gain compliance through notions of care and compassion. In one instance, what appeared to camp counsellors as a ‘fun’ way to manage camper behaviours was experienced as humiliating and hurtful:

...campers who misbehaved, were not only pointed out by the counsellors but then the director would gather them up. She’d tie them together with a skipping rope and

staff licked marshmallows and threw them at the kids, which on the surface might have seemed like a sort of silly discipline...but emotionally they were being abused. It was humiliating for them (Elissa).

While this form of behaviour management was seen by the camp director as “silly” (Elissa), it highlights that young people may simply not have the experience or insight to recognise the effects of disciplinary techniques. The line between what looks fun, is experienced as fun and what is not can be implicit, subtle and nuanced. Youthful and inexperienced camp counsellors are responsibilised to enact sanctions on behaviours, such as these, with limited supervision. Elissa was an onlooker to this example of ‘fun’ discipline but was shocked, “It was disgusting and on what level is that appropriate? You know even being 10 I had a sense of indignation of what was happening to those campers.” A disciplinary practice, like the one described, governs both those upon whom it is exercised and those who wish not to be subjected to the same punishment (Foucault, 1977). Such practices disrupt claims toward moral development. This raises critical questions about the degree of reflexive management practices needed to support and monitor camp counsellors who govern the ‘good’ and ‘fun’ of camper experiences.

Concluding comments

Summer camps articulate a promise to develop positive moral character through fun recreational activities. The ‘good’ of camp is assumed to benefit all children and this is reinforced by camp organising bodies, like the ACA, with statements like “camps are essential to every child’s growth and education” (ACA, 2008). This reassures parents’ that their children will become successful and enterprising selves through experiences at camp. Fun discourses are, at times, mobilised to compliment and support the achievement of the

benefits promised, often by using activities to render children as docile and manageable bodies. Camp counsellors must negotiate complex power relations in the delivery of idealised camper experiences, despite their own inexperience and youth. This article makes visible how camp counsellors mobilise ‘good’ and ‘fun’ discourses to govern campers’ and their own experiences.

Foucauldian notions of governmentality makes visible the complexities of responsibilising relatively inexperienced and youthful camp counsellors to produce camper experiences. Camp experiences are mediated, produced and negotiated in relation to a range of cultural texts and expectations. Camp counsellors take up and mobilise dominant discourses by governing themselves and campers in ways that reflect these expectations. In doing so, they shape what is and is not possible for their own and camper experience. However, when alternative and divergent experiences are acknowledged, we recognise the tensions and potential pitfalls of all-encompassing discourses about camp. The fun of camper experiences, for example, often masks experiences of discomfort and fear. Our findings suggest that campers and camp counsellors mobilise these discourses, to varying degrees, even when their own experiences don’t reflect the fun or benefits idealised and promoted. By drawing on a discourses analysis of camp purpose statements and camp counsellor interviews, this study demonstrates the tensions and dilemmas that camp counsellors must navigate in their own and camper experiences. Despite their inexperience, camp counsellors are expected to deliver ‘fun’ camp activities that gains compliance, produces enjoyment, develops entrepreneurial selves, produces future citizens, delivers immunity from future misfortunes and develops the psyches’ of campers. Camp counsellors are positioned at the

intersection of discourses that produce expectations and promises for campers, parent purchasers and service delivery organisations/camps.

This research draws attention to the need for scholars, industry leaders and practitioners to engage in reflexive discussion about how experiences are governed in broader contexts of child and youth leisure experiences. Sport's clubs, social organisations (Scouts, Guides, Duke of Edinburgh, 4H), after-school and vacation care programs, recreational lessons (piano, dance, swimming, skating), and a host of others child and youth activities face similar tensions in negotiating the competing discourses involved in the delivery of child recreational services and experiences. Many providers mobilise similar discourses of fun and benefits and in so doing favour certain modes of being. Each sector, experience or service may have its own discourses of successful participant selves but conformity/compliance, in general, is usually privileged. Ironically, rebellion or resistance to social norms is expected, if not desirable, as signifiers of youth agency and empowerment, yet it can unsettle and elicit even greater degrees of regulation and discipline by service providers. Thus, youth organisations have an ethical responsibility to question and rethink the assumption that leisure experiences are essentially good and make visible the exercise of power that can serve to shift, reinforce, or normalised understandings about child and youth leisure experiences. There is a need for further research to examine how youthful employees delivering recreational experiences to children are governed through particular discourses that shape both their own conduct and the conduct of those within their care.

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